

distinguished office, athlete, and mentor. While doing all this, he has managed to go back to school and earn a degree. For this outstanding service to his community, he is indeed worthy of receiving our recognition today. I hope that all of my colleagues will join me in honoring this truly remarkable man.

OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE
COMMUNITY

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 12, 2001

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to join the Connecticut Federation of Educational and Professional Employees, AFT, AFL-CIO in paying tribute to their president of twenty-two years, and my dear friend, George C. Springer as he celebrates the occasion of his retirement. His outstanding leadership and unparalleled dedication has made a difference in the lives of thousands of families across Connecticut.

I have always held a firm belief in the importance of education and a deep respect for the individuals who dedicate their lives to ensuring that our children—our most precious resource—are given a strong foundation on which to build their futures. As a twenty year veteran of the New Britain, Connecticut school system, George made it his personal mission to help our students learn and grow—touching the lives of thousands of students.

During his tenure in the New Britain school system, George also served as an officer and negotiator for the New Britain Federation of Teachers, Local 871. Twenty-two years ago, he was elected to the position of state federation president. As the state president, George has been a tireless advocate for his membership and their families. I have often said that we are fortunate to live in a country that allows its workers to engage in efforts to better employee standards and benefits. George has been a true leader for teachers across the state, providing a strong voice on their behalf.

George set a unique tone for this organization, extending their mission beyond the fight for better wages, better work environments, and more comprehensive health benefits. He has led the effort of the Connecticut chapter to become more involved with the larger issues of how to improve our schools—for teachers and for students. Though we will miss him in the long battle ahead, George's leadership and outspoken advocacy on behalf of our public school system will continue to be an inspiration to us all.

In addition to his many professional contributions, George has also been involved with a variety of social service organizations in the community. The John E. Rodgers African-American Cultural Center, New Britain Boys Club, Amistad America, Inc., Coalition to End Child Poverty, and the New Britain Foundation for Public Giving are just a portion of those organizations who have benefitted from his hard work and contagious enthusiasm.

It is my great honor to rise today to join his wife, Gerri, their four children, ten grandchildren and four great-grandchildren, as well as the many family, friends, and colleagues who have gathered this evening to extend my deepest thanks and appreciation to George C.

Springer for his outstanding contributions to the State of Connecticut and all of our communities. He will certainly be missed but never forgotten.

INTRODUCTION OF THE RUSSIAN
DEMOCRACY ACT—H.R. 2121

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 12, 2001

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce HR 2121, the Russia Democracy Act—legislation designed to enhance our democracy, good governance and anti-corruption efforts in order to strengthen civil society and independent media in Russia. Without a viable civil society, Russia cannot achieve true economic prosperity—nor will it cease to be a potential security threat to the United States.

The Freedom Support Act, signed into law in 1992 by the former President Bush, focused on eliminating the threat to U.S. national security from political instability and “loose nukes” in Russia, and was therefore primarily a government-to-government program. This effort succeeded in significantly reducing this security threat, and consistently won bipartisan support and funding in Congress.

The Russia Democracy Act expands upon U.S. initiatives that have proven successful in Russia. Among other things, it provides further support for local democratic governments through the Regional Investment Initiative; expands training for Russian journalists in investigative techniques designed to ferret out corruption; and it broadens successful U.S.-Russia cultural exchanges, such as those sponsored by the Library of Congress.

The Russia Democracy Act also launches a number of new initiatives to take advantage of new developments in Russian society over the past decade. It harnesses new information technologies to provide Internet access to Russian citizens, independent media and NGOs. It builds upon successful business education programs to establish new “American Centers” at Russian universities to share public policy, rule of law and civics experience and expertise. And it taps the growing network of local, independent media outlets to spread democratic principles through Radio Liberty and Voice of America.

By targeting assistance to Russian civil society at the grassroots level, and by staying ahead of the development curve, the Russia Democracy Act represents a bold new effort to support agents of democratic change in Russia.

Having laid the groundwork of democracy over the past decade, the Russian people must now develop the civil society and a genuine democratic culture to sustain it. Russia is no longer starting from ground zero. For the first time in their democratic institutions are in place, and civil society is taking shape thousand year history, the Russian people felt empowered to make their own decisions about matters that concern them. Millions of Russians have been able to travel freely outside their country. A myriad of citizens groups and NGOs exist, including parent-teacher associations, legal defense organizations, environmental interest groups, small business associations, societies for the protection of soldier conscripts, and many others.

On the other hand, Russia's government no longer embraces Western assistance as a matter of national pride—even if this cuts across Russia's national interests. For instance, just last month, President Putin rejected a World Bank loan that would have helped address Russia's growing tuberculosis crisis. Under these circumstances, we must look for more creative and targeted engagement with Russia's civil society and local authorities, rather than limiting our contacts to Russia's central government.

Russia is in the mid-stream of this transformation with much unfinished business—economic and structural reforms, eradication of corruption, arresting capital flight, reforming the military, rationalizing relations between the federal center and the regions, and countless others. Rather than preserving newly acquired democratic freedom, the current leadership in Moscow appears bent on its reversal. In an effort to implement economic reforms and reassert Russian national interests on the world stage, Putin is consolidating state power at the expense of Russian civil society. He condones the abuse of government power to quash internal dissent and silence criticism of his regime. The raid and hostile government takeover of Russia's most important independent newspaper, magazine and television outlets, and last week's prevention of a human rights leader Sergei Grigoryants from boarding a flight bound for Washington where he was to attend a conference on Russia are sad examples of this trend.

The Congress has a responsibility to aid the President in cultivating Russian civil society. Historically, America's lawmakers have played a central role in this effort. The Jackson-Vanik amendment of the 1970's, for instance, linked economics and human rights, and effectively undermined Soviet Communism and hastened the arrival of Russian democracy. The Congress must again rise to the occasion.

In the final analysis, a democratic Russia, respecting human rights and observing international norms of peaceful behavior, is squarely in U.S. national security interests. Millions of Russians want to be part of the West culturally, politically, and in many other senses. These forces need to be strengthened. In my judgement the Russian Democracy Act is an incredibly prudent investment on the part of the United States to bolster whatever democratic forces there are in Russia. This is a critically important piece of legislation, and I urge my colleagues in Congress to support it.

GRADUATION ADDRESS AT US
ARMY WAR COLLEGE

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 12, 2001

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege to give the commencement address at the US Army War College on June 9, 2001. It was a terrific honor. My speech to that group is set forth as follows:

MILITARY HISTORY AND THE BATTLEFIELD OF
THE FUTURE

A couple of years ago, I prepared an article with the assistance of the Congressional Research Service entitled, “Learning on the